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## WASHINGTON, D. C.

For the National Era,  
HERMAN;  
YOUNG KNIGHTHOOD.

By E. FOXON,  
Author of "Priscilla."

CHAPTER III.

The Knight's Tryal.

"But, mistress, know you, down upon your knees, And thank Heaven, fasting, for a good man's love?"

"I have no sleep; for that I am to blame." Philip Van Artevelde.

Constance went home to her hotel, and as up all the rest of the night in her dressing gown and slippers, "preparing herself" for the morrow. A very poor way, my dear little girlish readers, of preparing yourselves for anything, unless by and by, perhaps, some crisis of life, such as sometimes comes even to creatures as gentle as you, not many years old!—such as great sickness, or sorrow, or joy, which drives us from sleep away—so many hours of drivings in the thoughts, or prayers! What did our forefathers say to that doctrine, when it can attest to their liberties? "Our country, right or wrong, I suppose, as every patriot must."

"And you are determined not even to hear what I have to say for myself? Oh, Constance!—Miss Aspinwall, I have been so terribly mistaken! Have I only my own presumption to thank for my hope that at some future time—not by the mad presumption of last night—for I can never forgive myself—but by the patient devotion of months and years, I might win—your affection?"

"A common woman would answer, that you had only your own presumption to thank for it, and would hide by a shameless falsehood her shame at having allowed her preference to be won by a person incapable of rewarding and retaining it. I am not a common woman; and I shall stoop to such meanness. It is no shame to me, to have been led on to—almost—love the man you seemed!"

"He started up: "You almost loved! Then, O most devout, sweetest being, love me! Love me, Constance! O Constance, Constance, I don't know how to seem!"

"Excuse me, you seemed, though a Northern man, a perfectly liberal and unprejudiced man; and you are all abolitionists."

Constance rose from the almost as fast as a woman's love of her. Pride and affection were thine in the scales; and the expressions of delighted hope at the instant in his face and voice, tossed pride up almost to the beam; but Satan, having been invited in to the conference, stayed without ringing, and stood by all the time, ready to put in his foot, heavy as the Indian fire-dealer found the white man's breath.

"So some of the newspapers say," I know," answered Herman; and so are you an Orthodox Christian, and I, too; I hope; though one of us goes to St. Paul's and the other to King's Chapel, and neither of us to Park-street Church or the Old South, with the so-called Orthodox *excellence*. What's in a name? I have no intention, I assure you, of binding myself to the bidding of any political party; but this name of Abolitionist is a very *ugly* one, and may be applied to a very great variety of people. May I ask what you know of them?"

"Quite as much as I wish. I know that they are a set of wild and lawless people, who are ready to drown their native country in blood, in order to take away the rights and property of their neighbors, and undo all that their fathers fought for. They are a Sunday army, who are very bold like her, though she could not dare to be very bold like her, though she had discovered it before it was too late, and return to her old allegiance. She would make up her mind before he came, what to say, and how to say it in a few concise words, which should open no door to discussion. No wily Northern tongue should cover her out of her principles. She would have the master over, and forget it. She thought of Jephtha's daughter, and was sure that she was not to be very bold like her, though she could not dare to be very bold like her, though she had discovered it before it was too late, and return to her old allegiance. She would make up her mind before he came, what to say, and how to say it in a few concise words, which should open no door to discussion.

Constance was getting upon *the stamp*, which is often, if not usually, in one of her six, equivalent to putting herself in a false position; and the *goddess* of good-breeding could always keep the corners of his mouth in order; but anything comical which came in his way, even in his saddest moments, was invariably as *flint* to steel to his eyes; they would sparkle at it without his knowledge. Besides, Constance's evident thawing had raised the air of a very *harmless* social lover's quarrel; and they were chattering together, as if soon to be again on their former terms or more. Constance saw in an instant the weak point in her creation, and in another mood she would have laughed outright; but Satan, applied that innocent involuntary little sparkle (why should a spark not be her pride?) and it exploded, and blew him up at once. Did Herman mean that he was *so* good? (He never dreamed of such a thing!) But it was occurred to him, as he spoke, for the first time, that she might not be a woman yet.

Perhaps it was something that egotistical in his manner, or his looks, or his eyes, or his smile, as a brother and sister, emblem respectively for manly and maidenly beauty, well as a polo and Diana; Herman said, "no offence to Edward—as body and soul;" it had been one of the innumerable whims of his child-hood to call her, after her got a smattering of Greek, "Edward's Psyche," and the pretty name of Psyche had clung to her to this time. Both of them had the same generous and regal beauty of form and harmonious and regular cast of face—just not quite Grecian enough to make American Nature seem a plagiarist; their disagreement was assuming the air of a very *harmless* social lover's quarrel; and they were chattering together, as if soon to be again on their former terms or more. Constance saw in an instant the weak point in her creation, and in another mood she would have laughed outright; but Herman would think she had been crying, and she had not—at least not much, and it was only because she was tired out of spirits, and had no mother nor family to care for her, and felt sorry to lose the friendship of Clara Arden, who would of course be sure to take Herman's side, right or wrong—sisters always did so—and she wished, for her part, she had one, too, poor girl! So she threw herself on her bed, under an eider-down quilt, and when he had come, made her call her again at ten; slept three hours, rose, feeling as possible most weary, irritable, and wretched; than before; drank a cup of strong coffee, which, as she could do nothing with it, merely added a sort of universal tensity of mind and to her previous weariness; had her thin, long, fine, black hair satisfactorily tied to the further torment of her aching head, laid in her elegant morning dress walked down stairs, supporting herself by the banisters, to a pensive pastor, which she shared with her *admirable* champion, Mrs. Courtney Van Roselandt, of New York, and, as though she was dreading to make calls, she now had to herself. She sat down and waited a quarter of an hour. Her head throbbed more and more. The door-bell rang.

"Mr. Arden?" "Show him in."

He was in the room. She looked up and rose. Each saw how very pale the other was; and one was sorry. She had intended to shorten the interview by not inviting him to sit down; but finding herself unable to stand, (and the consequences to one's nerves of preparing one's self) was forced to sink again in her chair, and to point to another. He moved towards it mechanically, but only leaned upon the back of it, and stood looking into her face. He did not begin.

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